

**University Partnerships with Community Change Initiatives:  
Lessons Learned from the Technical Assistance Partnerships  
of the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation's  
Neighborhood Improvement Initiative**

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## **FORWARD**

The concept of University-Community Partnerships is not new. For more than 30 years, scholars and activists alike have written about the opportunities and challenges associated with actively engaging anchor institutions such as universities and hospitals in affecting change in distressed communities. Universities, as major employers and sources of financial, intellectual and social capital, are increasingly engaged in convening, educating and connecting citizens from neighboring communities to the vast resources that are within their reach.

Although the idea of University-Community Partnerships is not a novel one, the challenge of creating a model that allows for organized and constructive interaction between the university and its neighboring communities has plagued many. The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation has facilitated the creation of a comprehensive and effective University-Community Partnership model through its Neighborhood Improvement Initiative (NII). The NII is designed to improve the physical, economic, and social conditions of select neighborhoods through resident-led efforts that benefit greatly from the extensive resources of prominent academic institutions.

As home to two of the world's most prestigious private and public universities, Stanford University and the University of California at Berkeley, the San Francisco Bay Area is fertile ground for the continuation and expansion of unique and productive partnerships. Building upon existing relationships, important partnerships were formed with Stanford's Haas Center for Public Service to support the work in the East Palo Alto site and with U.C. Berkeley's Institute of Urban and Regional Development (IURD) to support the work in West Oakland.

The monograph that follows is the first of a series of reports to be published over the next several years on the Foundation's NII. It is designed to facilitate joint learning and contribute to building the field of comprehensive community initiatives (CCIs). It examines the specific role of students and faculty in providing responsive research, technical assistance and evaluation supports. It also discusses the Foundation's choice of the Haas Center and IURD as the pathways to the Universities' vast resources.

Findings from the Foundation's NII are essential for any party that desires to learn more about building and sustaining a successful University-Community Partnership with foundation brokerage. The Foundation has experimented with the typical model of university interaction in attempts to take it beyond the traditional entry point, local school districts, toward a more comprehensive way to work with communities. Although providing a pathway to unlock the tremendous human, social and economic resources of lower wealth areas through the assistance of major universities is an ambitious undertaking, it is important that communities be able to perceive universities as another resource rather than an untouchable, separate entity. Through this experimentation, we have learned that if properly organized and conducted, a University-Community partnership will benefit the university and the community it serves. This monograph is commended for your reading as

it outlines several ways to ensure effective implementation of a University-Community Partnership.

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## Executive Summary

The purpose of this monograph is to add to the existing store of lessons learned about university-community partnerships by drawing upon the experience of the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation's Neighborhood Improvement Initiative. As part of the Initiative, neighborhoods in East Palo Alto and West Oakland formed multiyear partnerships with the Haas Center for Public Service at Stanford University and the Institute of Urban and Regional Development at UC Berkeley, respectively. These partnerships focus on technical assistance and support.

While there are significant differences between the two partnerships, they also have much in common. The array of services has been quite similar, as has the effort to build a collaborative relationship that moves beyond the traditional "paternalistic model" for university-community partnerships. The two sites, which have become known as One East Palo Alto and the 7th Street/McClymonds Corridor Initiative, share many common experiences about what works to build and sustain university-community technical assistance partnerships. The lessons learned should be of value to community initiatives, universities, and the funders of their partnerships, whether foundations or government.

This Executive Summary covers the key lessons learned for each section of the monograph. The stories and examples throughout this monograph convey much better the challenges and opportunities of the partnerships.

### **The Functions of University Partners in Community Change Initiatives**

A university has a rich array of roles in a technical assistance partnership. Between them, the Haas Center and IURD have helped staff the community initiative processes, provided translation services, educational opportunities for residents, and illuminating information and analysis; and aided community capacity building; prepared new community leaders; improved access to information; and performed strategic research. Their functions have at times moved beyond technical assistance to include space, money, furniture and equipment, contacts and introductions, and political support.

### **How Universities Mobilize Their Resources to Serve These Functions**

Universities have many choices for how to organize the technical assistance they provide for community change initiatives. The linchpin is a broker within the university that identifies community needs and organizes the university response to them. Playing this role, the Haas Center and IURD have been resourceful in serving Initiative needs. They have drawn on classes, volunteer programs, research assistants, thesis programs, dormitory projects, and resource centers (such as computing and geographic information).

### **Value Added to Community Initiatives**

Local leaders and residents of communities believe the value added from university-community partnership is substantial. Participants in One East Palo Alto and the 7th Street/McClymonds Corridor Initiative point to benefits that include better planning, a more fluid community process with fewer information bottlenecks, heightened enthusiasm, more

innovative approaches to change, cost savings, and enhanced capacity among local residents and organizations.

### **Value Added to Universities**

Both Stanford University and UC Berkeley participants feel they also have benefited from their involvement in the Initiative. They have gained powerful learning experiences for students and faculty, more and better work slots for students, engagement in the community for more students who seek it, access to local knowledge and new perspectives, better relationships with communities, and, at Stanford University, an opportunity to reinvent service learning and community partnership.

### **Getting Started: Key Steps Toward a Foundation-Brokered Partnership**

Often there are not strong relationships between universities and their surrounding communities upon which to build a partnership. A foundation can be a good broker because of its resources, relationships, and access to leaders in both the university and community. Foundations brokered the university-community partnerships in both East Palo Alto and West Oakland. What turned out to be key elements to making a good match were buy-in from the community for the university partnership; identifying a university center experienced in working across disciplines and bringing people together in collaborative projects, especially a center whose values matched those of community leaders; creating a chance for the university and community to explore together whether and how they could work with each other; and providing funding for both the university center and the community initiative.

A final step to ensure a good base for partnership is aligning values. Shared values and beliefs can sustain a university-community partnership when there are misunderstandings and disagreements. The experience in East Palo Alto and West Oakland suggests that partners should have mutual appreciation and respect for each other, a similar set of beliefs about how community change occurs, compatible missions, sensitivity to power relationships, sensitivity to race and class issues, long-term commitment, and flexibility.

### **Building a Sustainable Partnership: Policies and Procedures**

Starting with a similar set of values helps to guide a university-community partnership, but it is still important to put in place procedures and structures that embody these values. The experience in East Palo Alto and West Oakland suggests some key steps that build toward a sustainable partnership. Community leaders need to demonstrate to the rest of the community that the university has a role and is welcome; help the community understand what the university can do and what its limitations are as a technical assistance partner, as well as what they can teach the university; participate in training for faculty and students; and find ways to provide timely feedback to the university partner.

The university partner must actively and aggressively broker university resources by attending Initiative meetings to surface needs and build relationships; prioritizing projects with Initiative leaders; recruiting students and faculty; preparing, coordinating, supporting, and managing students; and receiving and acting on feedback. The university partner must hire staff who connect well with community members and hire enough staff to responsively

fulfill all of the roles previously described. The university partner must ensure that all of its clients in the community—the Initiative board, other community projects, and, perhaps, the foundation funder—understand the potential for conflicting needs and agree on a plan for addressing them. It must become adept at designing inclusive research processes that help community members to develop new capacities, and resist making decisions for the community. And it must deliver on each of its commitments. To make it easier to show follow-through on commitments, the university should operate with explicit expectations about activities, timetables, and reporting requirements.

If there is a foundation funder, it also can take steps to help build a sustainable partnership. The foundation must be very specific with both the community and the university about minimum project requirements, make sure the university has the capacities to deliver on critical projects, put into a contract with the university only those projects that have the support of the community initiative's leadership, and spend time with all of the partners choosing performance requirements for the university and the community.

Finally, the partners should establish principles and a process for working together that includes regular meetings to agree on projects and monitor progress.

### **Translating the Policies into Action: Mining the Human Resources of a University for Community Change Initiatives**

What makes IURD and the Haas Center strong brokers of university human resources is the enormous planning and outreach they have undertaken to mine the resources of their university for their initiative. They maintain a database of faculty and community interests, which, along with constant outreach, allows them to quickly respond to requests from the community. They target students who have the right attitude to succeed in the community, as well as excellent research and work skills. They aggressively recruit students, between them using student liaisons, publications and newsletters, presentations to classes, workshops, and campus student groups. They cultivate relationships with faculty from a variety of departments, who provide a pipeline to students and build support for community collaboration. They work for university-wide incentives for service learning and applied research, as well as funding to cover the costs of projects in the community. They carefully prepare students for work in the community through orientation sessions, information packets, and discussion groups. The universities also create learning opportunities for participating students, allowing them to reflect on their experience and connect it to what they are learning in the classroom.

### **Conclusion**

With a high level of commitment and creativity, a university can serve the technical assistance needs of a community initiative, adding value for both partners. It takes time and effort, but the fundamental work involved is the same that any strong partnership requires: surfacing values with the intent of building a truly respectful relationship, adopting policies and procedures that embody the values of the partnership, anticipating where conflicting agendas may emerge and agreeing on how they will be handled, and being flexible, accepting a natural evolution of the partnership.

## Introduction

The number of partnerships between universities and community change initiatives has grown through the years. Partnerships that often are cited in the professional literature include Yale University, Clark University, DePaul University, and University of Pennsylvania. Each partnership between a university and a community initiative has its own features and focus. In some cities, universities use all of their resources to support community change. In other locales, they have a narrower role, such as evaluation or technical support. Some partnerships deal with physical development, such as housing creation. Others deal with human development, such as educational access. There have been a series of efforts to collect the lessons from these partnerships.<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of this monograph is to add to the lessons already learned by drawing upon the experience of the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation's Neighborhood Improvement Initiative. The university-community partnerships formed as part of this initiative are multiyear partnerships focusing on technical assistance and support. The goal is human development, both empowering residents through information and helping to build community capacity. Unlike much of the literature, this monograph tries to present both the university and the community perspectives.

The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation's Neighborhood Improvement Initiative is a resident-led, seven-year effort to improve the physical, economic, and social conditions of three neighborhoods in the San Francisco Bay Area. The Hewlett Foundation has pledged up to \$4.5 million over six years to each neighborhood to leverage the resources needed to implement strategic plans. The Hewlett Foundation's Neighborhood Improvement Initiative model has the following characteristics:

- Geographically compact neighborhoods of about 10,000 people are targeted.
- Residents are the key decisionmakers. With other stakeholders, they form a collaborative to craft a strategic plan for improvement.
- A community-based lead agency and a community foundation managing partner staff the collaborative during planning.
- During the planning year, small projects are funded to spark residents' interest and create momentum.
- Throughout the process, technical assistance providers develop baseline data and help residents to advance their leadership and governance skills.

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<sup>1</sup> For example: Karen Fulbright-Anderson, Patricia Auspos, Andrea Anderson, "Community Involvement in Partnerships with Educational Institutions, Medical Centers, and Utility Companies", a paper prepared by the Aspen Institute Roundtable on Comprehensive Community Initiatives for the Annie E. Casey Foundation, January 2001; Nancy Nye and Richard Schramm, "Building Higher Education-Community Development Corporation Partnerships", prepared for SEEDCO, for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1999; Victor Rubin, "The Roles of Universities in Community-Building Initiatives", *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, vol. 17, no. 4, Summer 1998.



- Community foundations, conduits for the funds, get better connected to the neighborhoods, which helps them to continue making improvements after the Initiative ends.
- An advisory committee representing local government, private enterprise, nonprofit organizations, and other funders provides practical advice, fundraising expertise, and connections to essential resources during implementation and after the Hewlett Foundation's support ends.

The Neighborhood Improvement Initiative was launched in 1996 and, through a staged process, selected three neighborhoods in different cities around the San Francisco Bay Area over the next three years: the Mayfair neighborhood on the east side of San Jose in 1996, the 7th Street/ McClymonds Corridor in West Oakland in spring 1998, and the Mid-Town/University Garden Park Village Corridor in East Palo Alto in July 1999. The latter site soon became known as One East Palo Alto.<sup>2</sup>

The Hewlett Foundation's model included a substantial investment in technical assistance. Each of the three sites used universities in a different way to meet its technical assistance needs:

- The Mayfair Neighborhood Improvement Initiative site chose to rely on private consultants for most of its technical assistance needs. However, it strategically partnered with universities for specific purposes.
- The 7th Street/McClymonds Corridor Neighborhood Improvement Initiative site in West Oakland began by using a mix of nonprofit intermediaries and university students and faculty to meet its technical assistance needs. It later shifted most of its technical assistance provision to the Institute of Urban and Regional Development (IURD) at UC Berkeley. IURD is a campus-wide research unit that manages faculty and student research on urban and regional development issues and has a history of coordinating community development research and partnerships. It is under contract to the Initiative's community foundation managing partner.
- One East Palo Alto began with the Haas Center for Public Service at Stanford University as a core partner in the Initiative, not only providing student and faculty support, but also helping to plan the Initiative. The Haas Center for Public Service promotes, organizes, and supports public and community service among members of the Stanford University community, especially students. The Haas Center also is under contract to the Initiative's community foundation managing partner.

This monograph presents and interprets lessons learned from the One East Palo Alto and 7th Street/McClymonds Corridor Neighborhood Improvement Initiatives, the sites that chose to build long-term partnerships with a university center. There are important differences between the two partnerships. IURD is a research institute within a public university. The Haas Center is a public service institute within a private, basic research university. IURD committed to provide technical assistance to the 7th Street/McClymonds site, while the Haas Center committed to be a core partner within the One East Palo Alto Initiative. IURD joined with the 7th Street/McClymonds Corridor site in its second year,

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<sup>2</sup> Exhibit A contains a brief description of each of the Neighborhood Improvement Initiative sites.

while the Haas Center was a partner from the first day. IURD joined the Initiative at the behest of the Initiative's community foundation partner, while key community organization leaders welcomed the Haas Center. IURD provided the Initiative mostly with graduate students, while the Haas Center provided undergraduate students. These differences have shaped the experience of the two Initiatives, as the following lessons learned clearly demonstrate.

In spite of these differences, the university partnerships with One East Palo Alto and the 7th Street/McClymonds Corridor Initiative have much in common. The universities provided a similar array of services to the communities. They both worked hard to move beyond the traditional "paternalistic model" in which a university knows what is best and is testing its theories in the community.<sup>3</sup> They share common experiences about what works to build and sustain university-community technical assistance partnerships. The lessons learned should be of value to community initiatives, universities, and the funders of their partnerships, whether foundations or government.

The monograph is based upon a review of documents and twenty-eight interviews of key leaders from the Hewlett Foundation's Neighborhood Improvement Initiative sites, including foundation staff, community foundation staff, Initiative board and advisory board members, Initiative grantees, lead community agencies, faculty, students, and university administrators. Heartfelt thanks go to all of the interviewees who were so candid about their experiences and the lessons learned.

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<sup>3</sup> Nancy Nye and Richard Schramm, "Building Higher Education-Community Development Corporation Partnerships," Prepared for SEEDCO, prepared for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1999.

## **The Functions of University Partners in Community Change Initiatives**

In the time that they have been partners in the Hewlett Foundation's Neighborhood Improvement Initiatives, Stanford University's Haas Center for Public Service and UC Berkeley's Institute of Urban and Regional Development (IURD) have served a variety of technical assistance functions. Their experience suggests a rich array of roles for a university in a technical assistance partnership.

### **I. Providing Student Support of the Community Process**

Community processes are highly staff intensive. Students can be very productive as staff to the process. The Haas Center at Stanford University has provided an enormous amount of no-wage, high-capacity undergraduate student labor to the One East Palo Alto Initiative. The high energy of the students energized people. During the community outreach phase of One East Palo Alto, undergraduate students worked on phone banks, canvassed door-to-door, and distributed posters around the community. During the planning phase, students were detailed to community planning groups to take minutes, help facilitate the meetings, answer information requests, and suggest strategies. They assisted with meeting set-up, served food, and cleaned up. These supportive activities helped to build positive relationships with members of the community, and later in the process, when the students did not participate as much in meetings and events, they were missed.

At UC Berkeley, students played a smaller role in providing staff support for the community process, in large part because IURD works primarily with graduate students looking for research opportunities in the community to enrich their professional education. It is perhaps fortuitous that the one time UC Berkeley graduate students provided staff support to the Initiative, it was the first activity of the university for the Initiative. This early supportive role helped lay the groundwork for a broader partnership. At that time, UC Berkeley students provided support services in West Oakland as part of a community development studio course. The community members appreciated the support very much, and the students learned a lot about the challenges of local politics and group process. Looking ahead, IURD sees more opportunities for undergraduate students to support work groups, as Stanford University students have in East Palo Alto.

Translation services are a specific form of process support that can be highly useful. The Haas Center was able to identify undergraduate students and a small pool of consultants to translate at almost every One East Palo Alto planning meeting and for every Initiative document. At one point, twenty students who were enrolled in an introductory translation class signed on to assist local agencies in translating documents from English to Spanish to help facilitate the participation of residents, many of whom are non-native English speakers.

### **II. Building Community Capacity**

Community change initiatives try to fundamentally alter community conditions, usually by improving local capacity for change. Often what residents want most from university partners is help in building their own capacity. For the most part, community capacity

building is the result of thoughtful design of other activities, such as support for the process or a participatory research project. The Haas Center and IURD have tried various approaches to designing activities to facilitate community capacity building:

- **Capacity building as a result of supporting the community process.** Stanford students who have staffed work groups have helped residents to develop their meeting management and other skills.
- **Capacity building as a result of targeted technical assistance.** When the Haas Center helped develop evaluation and reporting systems for One East Palo Alto, it also provided training support for organizations and residents to use these systems. IURD staff has met with each of the community organizations awarded grants by the 7th Street/McClymonds Corridor Initiative to help them establish specific outcomes to measure their progress, and continues to work with them on how to achieve their goals.
- **Capacity building as a result of training community members to carry out research.** On several occasions in the past two years, IURD staff have trained community members to do community surveys alongside of Berkeley students and IURD staff.
- **Capacity building as a result of tapping university resources.** The Haas Center facilitated a link between an East Palo Alto high-technology internship program and Stanford Academic Computing. Stanford Academic Computing staff agreed to help raise scholarship funds for sixty East Palo Alto high school students to attend Academic Computing's Academy for New Media Program.
- **Capacity building through improving access to educational opportunities for residents.** The Haas Center organized a college access workshop for twenty Pacific Islander youth, which included information about Stanford and a leadership development exercise. A UC Berkeley business school professor taught business practices to budding West Oakland entrepreneurs. Residents also were invited to the Berkeley campus for short-term capacity-building courses, complete with transportation, child care, and food.
- **Capacity building as a result of research that worked especially well.** The students in a Department of City and Regional Planning community development studio class at UC Berkeley helped 7th Street/McClymonds Corridor Initiative members get on a more equal footing with the city concerning redevelopment by developing a comprehensive analysis of the city's plans for a redevelopment area in West Oakland and identifying tools residents could use to impact the nature of redevelopment.
- **Capacity building as a result of training future community leaders.** Talented students who get to know the community sometimes take jobs in the community when they graduate. In East Palo Alto, Stanford alumni have worked with all of the

partner organizations within One East Palo Alto, as well as other organizations in the community.

### **III. Ensuring Access to Usable Information**

Universities have easy access to technology to organize information and make it understandable and accessible to community members.

The Haas Center and IURD have used technology to deliver information through websites, newsletters, maps and posters, and geographical information systems. The Haas Center's Initiative website includes a comprehensive resource guide for East Palo Alto. Its newsletter has a wide distribution within Stanford University and among residents of and workers in East Palo Alto.

Both the Haas Center and IURD put a great deal of effort into making sure that information is not only accurate, but also reader friendly for everyone. They have helped the communities to create materials that graphically explain the Initiative and issues in the communities. For example, IURD has repeatedly arranged for the design of maps and posters to illustrate the findings of student research.

Both universities see the enormous potential of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) in helping residents to understand their community and explore the impact of change strategies. The director of the UC Berkeley Campus GIS Center has had students in his data-collection and project mapping studio course work on a GIS for West Oakland. The GIS presents a graphic, visual profile of West Oakland, including environmental hazards, service agencies, land use, vacant lots, and other variables. Part of the project is to develop a community interface, allowing community members to input data and use it for learning. IURD has worked to place a GIS computer linked to UC Berkeley databases at the 7th Street/McClymonds Corridor Neighborhood Improvement Initiative's office.

### **IV. Defining Problems and Suggesting Solutions**

As the community change initiatives get under way, participants begin to ask questions. Each answer leads to a new question, which keeps the process of learning and acting moving. University students hone their skills in finding and sharing the answers with the community. Both the Haas Center and IURD have made it a priority to be responsive to questions from participants in the Initiatives.

- **Timely Answers.** The Haas Center's quick response to questions that surfaced at weekly One East Palo Alto planning meetings created a lot of goodwill and helped the planning process to be based upon better information. IURD staff have played a similar role, attending most 7th Street/McClymonds Corridor Initiative community meetings. When community members ask questions, IURD staff figures out where to get the right data or how to find what are best practices. Residents especially like the idea of "information snapshots" on such topics as the quality of the school system or how community demographics are changing.

- **More Comprehensive Background Information.** Many student “counting” exercises have been valuable to the planning processes in East Palo Alto and West Oakland. These exercises have identified problems and opportunities and have shaped the Initiatives’ plans. For example, Berkeley students created a Community Capacity Inventory that (1) identifies organizations that could work with the Initiative to implement its plan, (2) summarizes current major redevelopment plans in and around West Oakland and how the 7th Street/McClymonds Corridor Initiative could align with or capitalize on them, and (3) identifies federal-, city-, and state-funded activities and private development that affects the neighborhood.
- **Analytical Research Projects.** If both sides are flexible, a variety of community research projects can fit into the structure of one or two academic terms. With strong faculty oversight, student research can be of high quality. Many studio classes at UC Berkeley encourage applied research and many faculty members are willing to guide students in this kind of research. While faculty members at Stanford University have been historically reluctant to support applied research in the community, there now is an expanding group of faculty willing to mentor undergraduate applied research.
- The university research projects that have taken place in East Palo Alto and West Oakland provide strong examples of the range of topics for which a university has expertise, including housing development, brownfields redevelopment, health assessment, communications, public finance, crime and safety, violence prevention, and small business and workforce development. A few more detailed examples illustrate the quality and depth this research can have:

*Housing Development:* Stanford University students helped One East Palo Alto’s housing work group to prepare a feasibility study for an affordable housing project on industrial land, including projections that showed median income requirements for a workable project. Haas Center staff also is exploring work with community members on how to build affordable housing that is functional and has low maintenance costs.

*Urban Redevelopment:* As mentioned earlier, a studio class in the Department of City and Regional Planning at UC Berkeley developed a comprehensive analysis of the city’s plans for a redevelopment area in West Oakland. The class reviewed state, city, and local experiences with redevelopment and held four meetings with residents to make sure many people understood the redevelopment process. To prepare community members to share what they learned, the class provided a brochure, full reports, power point handouts, and oversized color posters. This is a particularly good example because residents believe that the information received empowered them to influence the redevelopment process. Extending this work, one student who was already an attorney has worked with IURD to develop a Community and Economic Development Clinic with the East Bay Community Law Center, the clinical arm of the Boalt Hall School of Law. This clinic could institutionalize a way of providing timely advice to communities, including West Oakland, on a variety of development issues.

*Landscape Design:* The chairman of the Department of Landscape Architecture at UC Berkeley taught a landscape studio class for which his students developed some options for ways to redesign West Oakland. They also worked on a landscape installation along 7th Street in West Oakland to celebrate local jazz and blues history. This included sound, large-scaled black and white images of West Oakland musicians and activists from the middle of the last century, and blue benches placed along the corridor. The Landscape Architecture Department may in the future assist with other park and open-space planning.

*Social Service Integration:* IURD hired a PhD student in social welfare to study what services are delivered in West Oakland to seniors and youth and how they are delivered, exploring agency capacity, potential for linkage with other local and county agencies, and historical successes and failures in the intervention area. The student interviewed thirty senior service providers who wanted to work in Oakland. She also held a roundtable for all the service providers to explore cross-pollination and complimentary activities. Four of the participants at that roundtable have applied for grants offered by the 7th Street/McClymonds Corridor Initiative to serve seniors in the community.

## **V. Measuring Progress**

One of the tasks of community initiatives is figuring out how to measure progress. Both the Haas Center and IURD have contracts with the community foundations that are managing partners of the Initiatives. The contracts commit the universities to help the Initiatives develop systems for tracking progress. They have worked with community members to identify and select indicators that describe the impact of Initiative activities and that are meaningful to community residents and organizations. (This has been the most difficult role the universities have played, as described later in the monograph.) To support the regranting process of the Initiative, IURD also was asked to set up a program to evaluate the grantees of the 7th Street/McClymonds Corridor Initiative. It quickly became clear that IURD would be a more appreciated technical assistance partner for the Initiative if it did not have an evaluation role.

## **VI. Providing Consistent, Thoughtful Input**

IURD and the Haas Center staff provide thoughtful input at Initiative and working group meetings, pointing out emerging issues and suggesting ideas for project design. This is possible because they have invested a huge number of hours in attending community meetings, carefully listening to residents' concerns and questions. The payoff on this investment has been excellent relationships with the community and open lines of communication to identify ways the universities can add value.

## **VII. Developing Other Kinds of Support**

Building on a sustained technical assistance partnership, there is potential to evolve other kinds of support for the community, including space, furniture and equipment, contacts, political support, and even partners for housing and jobs projects. The Haas Center has provided all of these various kinds of support on an ad hoc basis, with the exception of housing and jobs partnerships.

The Haas Center has made its facilities available as meeting sites for East Palo Alto residents. The Haas Center has arranged for the distribution of used office furniture and gym equipment worth about \$50,000 to nonprofits in East Palo Alto. Both the Haas Center and IURD have hired community residents to participate in projects, such as visual surveys, using funding that they received from the community foundations. The Haas Center also has notified the Initiative about grants for which it might be eligible.

In terms of new contacts for the community, the Haas Center has brought both its board of trustees and university faculty to East Palo Alto to visit project efforts of the Initiative and to discuss ideas for working together. The Haas Center also has invited Initiative leaders to a variety of campus events where they could meet with faculty and form new relationships.

The Haas Center also has advocated for projects connected to the Initiative. For example, Linda Hammond, a Stanford professor who is a nationally recognized educator, supported a new charter high school for East Palo Alto. According to several community leaders, she helped to ensure that the school was created.

Some participants hope the day will come when the university partners will take on more developmental roles in the community, such as training for residents to work at the university, training and incentives for small businesses to obtain university contracts, and joint development of housing. These are roles that have been pursued in many university-community partnerships.<sup>4</sup> However, it is not surprising that the One East Palo Alto and 7th Street/McClymonds Corridor Initiative partnerships focus on what is within the purview of the Haas Center and IURD. Before they can draw on the capacities of their universities as providers of jobs, purchasers of services, and real estate developers, the partnerships will need to be further institutionalized. According to a SEEDCO report, the prerequisite for institutionalizing higher education-community partnerships is a commitment to community development that pervades the people, goals, structures, process, and culture of the university.<sup>5</sup> There have been positive steps in this direction, including new funding support at Stanford University for service learning and community-based research, but there is still a long way to go.

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<sup>4</sup> Karen Fulbright-Anderson, Patricia Auspos, Andrea Anderson, "Community Involvement in Partnerships with Educational Institutions, Medical Centers, and Utility Companies," prepared by the Aspen Institute Roundtable on Comprehensive Community Initiatives for the Annie E. Casey Foundation, January 2001.

<sup>5</sup> Nancy Nye and Richard Schramm, "Building Higher Education-Community Development Corporation Partnerships," prepared for SEEDCO, for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1999.



## **Summary: The Functions of University Technical Assistance Partners**

### **I. Providing Student Support of the Community Process**

- Student note-taking and meeting facilitation can bolster community planning.
- Student phone banking, canvassing, and postering can expand community outreach.
- Translation services can reduce language barriers to participation.

### **II. Building Community Capacity**

- Students and faculty can model skills, such as facilitation and meeting management.
- Faculty and staff can help community projects to clarify goals and refine strategies, train community members to perform research, such as visual surveys, and link community members to campus training and degree programs.
- University research can empower the community to impact local outcomes.
- Graduating students who, as a result of their Initiative work, go to work in the community add to the local pool of talent.

### **III. Ensuring Access to Usable Information**

- Websites and newsletters quickly spread information.
- Maps and posters make research findings easier to digest.
- Geographic Information Systems enable community members to test the impact of change strategies.

### **IV. Defining Problems and Suggesting Solutions**

- Timely answers encourage community members to generate more questions.
- More comprehensive background information informs the community plan.
- Analytical research projects help community members to implement strategies.

### **V. Measuring Progress**

### **VI. Providing Consistent, Thoughtful Input**

### **VII. Developing Other Kinds of Support**

- Space, furniture, and equipment helps an Initiative to get going.
- Contacts and introductions broaden support of the plan.
- Political support helps to fund and achieve program goals.
- Partnerships tapping the universities' roles as employer, purchaser, and real estate developer broaden the scope of projects that can be tackled.

## How Universities Mobilize Their Resources to Serve These Functions

Universities have a variety of ways to organize the technical assistance they provide for community change initiatives and create connections between campus and community. They can enlist students, faculty, and administrative staff. They can tap classes, independent researchers, fellowship and service programs, and resource centers for computing and other services. The linchpin for these potential resources is a broker within the university who identifies the community's needs and organizes the university's response to them. Playing this role, the Haas Center at Stanford University and IURD at UC Berkeley have consistently found ways to provide students, supervised by faculty, to support the Initiatives.

At UC Berkeley, the brokering agreement is codified in a contract with the San Francisco Foundation, managing partner for the 7th Street/McClymonds Corridor Initiative. The contract between IURD and the San Francisco Foundation says that IURD will complete a certain number of research projects each year through a combination of studio classes, student fellowships, internships, and other means. IURD has used the following means to provide mostly *graduate* student researchers:

- **Part-time Jobs.** Graduate students at UC Berkeley often have quarter-time jobs with local organizations.
- **Graduate Studio Classes.** One professor has offered community development studio classes designed to serve the 7th Street/McClymonds Corridor Initiative for three years. Each year, he designs a class project to meet community needs. Planning students are required to take one studio class but may take as many as one each semester.
- **Graduate Applied Classes.** Additional UC Berkeley courses require students to identify a project. For example, a survey research methods class invites community project leaders to present project ideas to the class. Students work in teams to develop surveys for the selected projects.
- **Graduate Research Assistantships.** IURD has hired paid research assistants to work with the 7th Street/McClymonds Corridor Initiative.
- **Master's Theses.** UC Berkeley master's students must write a thesis or professional report at the end of their programs. Several students have selected West Oakland studies for their theses. This has worked especially well for students who already have worked with the Initiative and built relationships in the community.
- **Specialty Labs.** The Geographic Information System lab has helped to build and support a GIS system for West Oakland.

The Haas Center has used, or is considering using, many of the same approaches to connect Stanford *undergraduate* students to One East Palo Alto, plus a few more:

- **Volunteers.** More than 60 percent of students working in East Palo Alto have been volunteers looking for community service opportunities. These students find the Initiative through extensive campus outreach efforts.
- **Standard Undergraduate Class.** Students enrolled in an introductory translation class sign on to assist local East Palo Alto agencies in translating documents from English to Spanish.
- **The Public Service Scholars Program.** Some seniors at Stanford University participate in this program, which supports research that provides information considered significant to government or the community.
- **Courses with a Service-Learning Component.** About 10 percent of students who have worked with One East Palo Alto came through classes that have various kinds of internship requirements. Students who participate in the Initiative through these classes tend to stay involved with the Initiative longer than other students do. One professor has taught a class for seven years in which students are placed in organizations in East Palo Alto. New funds set aside by Stanford University should encourage additional faculty to focus service courses on East Palo Alto.
- **Undergraduate Honors Theses.** Several Stanford students who have taken service-learning courses have gone on to do their honors thesis on a topic related to One East Palo Alto. From these classes, they develop research projects. Often the professor who taught the service-learning course agrees to be the student's thesis advisor.
- **Dormitory Projects.** A resident dean at Stanford University whose dorm is studying economic development wants a project for some of his students. The chair of the economic development work group has asked the Haas Center to help that happen.

In addition, both the Haas Center's and IURD's staff undertake research and other projects themselves. And, increasingly, faculty members also are involved in research projects, as in the case of a professor who is an evaluation expert helping the Haas Center to refine the community-designed progress indicators for the Initiative.

**Summary: Ways That Universities Mobilize Students, Faculty, and Staff  
to Provide Support and Technical Assistance to the Initiatives**

- Part-time jobs for students with community organizations
- Studio classes
- Classes with internship or project requirements
- Standard classes with a professor who has a keen interest in the project
- Research assistantships
- Thesis projects (graduate and undergraduate)
- Extracurricular volunteering
- Special public service programs
- Dormitory-based projects
- Resource labs
- Faculty research
- Staff research

## **Value Added to Community Initiatives**

Local leaders and residents believe that their community change initiatives have benefited from university involvement because of better planning, a more fluid community process with fewer information bottlenecks, heightened enthusiasm of student participants, more innovative approaches to change, cost savings, and enhanced capacity among local residents and organizations.

### ***I. Better Planning***

The Community Development Institute and other early leaders of One East Palo Alto designed an ambitious community organizing effort with support from Haas Center staff and the dozens of Stanford undergraduate students they mobilized. Center staff and students were a source of manpower that this effort required and, by providing relatively objective information on issues, the Center helped Initiative members acquire a common base of facts. For example, the numbers the university provided on East Palo Alto voter turnout changed how residents thought about the issues and strategies.

### ***II. A More Fluid Community Process with Fewer Information Bottlenecks***

An effective broker of university resources can respond quickly to many requests, avoiding delays while consultants are hired and contracts negotiated. University faculty and students have expertise across a broad range of disciplines, while other contractors often are more specialized. Students and faculty often are willing to stretch in seeking new solutions, while a significant number of consultants have one model they roll out. Student “consultants” also can be more flexible as project needs change over time.

When One East Palo Alto began to explore a partnership with local community colleges to create an adult learning center, the Haas Center quickly found a way to assist in formulating the program. When One East Palo Alto was working on a senior citizens coalition with the city and county, the Haas Center immediately stepped in to help. When the economic development work group needed an analysis of survey data gathered from Spanish-speaking residents, the Haas Center found a student to provide the analysis.

### ***III. Heightened Enthusiasm***

Students can have exceptional energy and contagious enthusiasm, useful attributes given the long, hard work of community change. Community leaders in both East Palo Alto and West Oakland note that student energy and enthusiasm buoyed the community processes.

### ***IV. More Innovative Approaches to Change***

Community members believe that the university partnerships helped the Initiatives to generate more innovative plans. For example, a significant piece of research by a Stanford professor provided a comparative analysis of school test scores for East Palo Alto students at its feeder schools, which revealed a pattern of unequal access that confirmed residents’ experience. Based upon these findings and broad-based advocacy, the school district develop a full proposal funded by the California Department of Education to implement a

charter high school. In a similar vein, the 7th Street/McClymonds Corridor Initiative used a land-use study produced by a UC Berkeley graduate student for his master's thesis to develop a brownfields project for affordable housing.

### ***V. Cost Savings***

Universities, particularly students, can be inexpensive “consultants.” Properly prepared students who have strong research backgrounds and work experience can provide services worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. When the director of the Alliance for West Oakland Development needed site plans and financial analyses for specific development sites, he turned to UC Berkeley students. The Alliance director knew he might need to make many changes in the design and would require multiple analyses. Private consultants would have charged hundreds of dollars each time the model changed; students could make these changes relatively quickly at a low cost, and they were more willing to teach community groups to do the analyses. The beneficiaries of several student researchers in West Oakland believe they received at low cost services with a market value of \$150,000, even after adjusting for the cost of preparing and supervising the students.

### ***VI. Enhanced Capacity among Local Residents and Organizations***

Universities can be more willing than private consultants to teach community groups how to do what needs to be done. Elsewhere in this paper are several examples of how the Haas Center and IURD have tried to help build community capacity. In addition, students who participate in a community initiative sometimes take jobs in the community when they graduate.

## Value Added to Universities

University-community partnerships are not one-way streets. The hard work has to pay off for the university, too. Both Stanford University and UC Berkeley participants feel they have benefited from their involvement in the Initiatives. They have gained powerful learning experiences for students and faculty, more and better work slots for students, engagement in the community for more students who seek it, access to local knowledge and new perspectives, better relationships with communities, and, at Stanford University, an opportunity to reinvent service learning and community partnership.

### ***I. Powerful Learning Experiences for Students and Faculty***

University partnerships can provide a sustained flow of meaningful learning experiences for students. Wedding direct experience in complex problemsolving situations with theory is a powerful pedagogy. Students at both Stanford and UC Berkeley say that their academic experience was enriched because it made the connection between theory and practice. According to a Stanford professor, part of the power of doing practical work comes from having a group of students work on different projects in one community with one local context. Class work can challenge students to see how solutions depend upon the politics, dollars, civic capacity, and leadership at any given moment in the life of the community.

### ***II. More and Better Work Slots for Students***

University-community partnerships can provide a means for professors to more quickly and easily identify class projects in the community. Active brokers of university resources can offer students better work options with genuine learning experiences. The Haas Center's brokering role has strengthened the campus work/study program. As a result, a growing number of professors are offering One East Palo Alto as an option to meet course fieldwork requirements. Being connected to an ongoing community initiative provides a richer set of placements, as has happened in West Oakland with ongoing projects related to Oakland redevelopment.

### ***III. Engagement in the Community for More Students Who Want It***

Many Stanford University and UC Berkeley students value real engagement in a community. Sustained community engagement may be particularly valuable in recruiting and retaining students who want to have a social impact and, perhaps, students of color.

### ***IV. Access to Local Knowledge and New Perspectives***

Stanford University students and faculty have learned about comprehensive community planning and how to work collaboratively with residents in new and deeper ways. Involvement in the Initiative has allowed some teaching faculty to consider in more depth how theory works on the ground. In a more concrete example, the East Palo Alto Community Law Project was struggling as to whether it would stay open. Its renewal with a new mission and directions occurred at least in part because of participation in One East Palo Alto.

## ***V. Better Relationships with the Community***

It makes good sense for a university to play a positive role in its local community. Many East Palo Alto residents do have a more positive view of Stanford University now than they did two years ago. As the coordinating entity for One East Palo Alto within the university, the Haas Center seems also to have amplified its role and standing in the community and the university. Although, as described later in this paper, some residents are unhappy about the role played by UC Berkeley and IURD in the 7th Street/McClymonds Corridor Initiative, student and faculty work in the community has helped many others to see the university in a more positive light.

## ***VI. An Opportunity to Reinvent Service Learning and Community Partnership***

The Haas Center staff has seen its involvement in One East Palo Alto as an opportunity to more fully achieve its mission. Haas Center staff hope to create a new model of community and university collaboration, one in which basic research universities have an operating role in partnerships with neighboring community centers.

There are signs at Stanford University of a growing interest in the scope of university-community engagement. The Haas Center's national advisory board has made its first-ever site visit to East Palo Alto. The Stanford University Faculty Senate invited the Haas Center director to present a review of the state of the university's involvement in the local community at a senate meeting. More than forty faculty members have expressed interest in East Palo Alto, and a smaller group met with the vice provost for undergraduate education to explore whether service-learning funds or undergraduate research funds could be made available to support community-based projects like One East Palo Alto. The vice provost approved a \$50,000 fund to expand undergraduate research meeting community needs.



**Summary: Ways University-Community Partnerships in  
East Palo Alto and West Oakland Have Created Value**

**Value Added to Community Initiatives**

- Better planning because of student staffing and access to information.
- A more fluid community process with fewer information bottlenecks.
- Buoying of the community processes through the heightened enthusiasm of students.
- More innovative approaches to change through university research.
- Cost savings through the use of well-supervised students rather than private consultants.
- Enhanced capacity among local residents and organizations as they acquired research skills and when graduating students took jobs in the communities.

**Value Added to Universities**

- Powerful learning experiences for students and faculty.
- More and better work slots for students.
- Engagement in the community for more students who want it.
- Better access to local knowledge and new perspectives about how theory works on the ground.
- Better relationships with the community through the supportive role the university staff plays in the Initiatives.
- An opportunity to reinvent service learning and community partnership.

## Getting Started: Key Steps Toward a Foundation-Brokered Partnership

Often there are few strong relationships between universities and their surrounding communities upon which to build a partnership. In some cases, there are old wounds to heal. A third-party broker can play a valuable role in exploring the potential for a university-community partnership. There are advantages in having a foundation play this role. A foundation can have leverage with a university to commit it to a long-term community relationship. It may also have access to senior administrators who can make broader commitments. A foundation also is likely to have relationships with leading community organizations in the community. Finally, a foundation has the resources that are essential to build a sustainable relationship, as both the university and the community are likely to need financial support for the partnership, at least in the initial stages.

Foundations brokered the university partnerships in both East Palo Alto and West Oakland. The Hewlett Foundation very early on approached Stanford University to request that it play a leadership role in One East Palo Alto. While one faculty member initiated the relationship between the 7th Street/McClymonds Corridor Initiative and UC Berkeley, the San Francisco Foundation, the managing partner for the Initiative, pursued the broader partnership with IURD that now exists. The experience in West Oakland and East Palo Alto provides some lessons about how a foundation can broker a university-community partnership.

### ***I. Making Overtures to a University***

A good university partner has experience working across disciplines and bringing people together in collaborative projects. This is *more likely to be a center or institute* (or the president's office) than an individual. The leadership of the center should be excited about the potential role and have values that can support a long-term relationship with a community. Because of their missions and the inclination of their leadership, the Haas Center and IURD both were looking for an expanded role in the Neighborhood Improvement Initiative communities.

Even if the technical support work is going to take place in a center or institute, it is valuable to have *higher-level buy-in*. Absent the approval of the provost at Stanford University, the partnership with the Haas Center probably would not have happened. With this approval, the Center had more flexibility to try new roles in the community and to reach out to other parts of the university. The opportunities are further multiplied if the president or provost of the university agrees to make the community partnership part of the university's agenda. This was not the case for either One East Palo Alto or the 7th Street/McClymonds Corridor Initiative.

When the Hewlett Foundation approached the Haas Center, the Peninsula Community Foundation (as managing partner), and the Community Development Institute (as lead agency) to partner in support of One East Palo Alto, it was tapping into *already existing*

*relationships*. People from all three institutions had worked together before and sensed that they could work together on the Initiative.

The Hewlett Foundation recognized early on that it needed to *provide financial support* for the universities to consider a long-term, broad partnership. Cross-disciplinary centers often have few discretionary resources. Also, universities are unlikely to internally fund these partnerships at the beginning, even if they support them more over time. Hewlett Foundation funding and Peninsula Community Foundation support allowed the Haas Center to expand its outreach and collaborative activities in East Palo Alto in an unprecedented manner. Funding for IURD allowed it also to vastly increase staffing and attention to the Initiative.

## ***II. Making Overtures to a Community Change Initiative***

While the Hewlett Foundation recruited the Haas Center, it was accepted and introduced to the community as a partner by Community Development Initiatives (CDI), a respected and trusted community organization. Having an *accepted community leader introduce the potential university partner* seems to be one factor that made it easier for the Haas Center to be accepted than it has been for IURD.

The professor at UC Berkeley who first initiated the idea of a relationship with the 7th Street/McClymonds Corridor Initiative knew the San Francisco Foundation staff person who was acting as managing partner for the Initiative. They shared a similar approach and understanding of community development. The East Palo Alto community gave Stanford University a chance in part because there were already Stanford students living in the community, attending church, and helping out at local events. The Haas Center sought out these students for its early work staffing the Initiative. In both instances, *prior relationships paved the way* for university-community initiative partnerships.

Many low-income communities are wary of university faculty and staff offering their help. There may have been prior bad experiences, as had happened in both West Oakland and East Palo Alto. For example, Stanford University faculty had done numerous studies on East Palo Alto that focused on its deficits. Because community members believed that this research had helped to build the national negative image of East Palo Alto, there needed to be some fence mending. Even where there isn't a prior history, community members need to defend themselves from being treated like research subjects. They deeply need potential university partners to be open to learning as well as teaching. It is hard to break down these barriers if there isn't some *common language and experiences* created by participating in joint projects. The foundation can help to create these opportunities, such as, for example, planning an event to benefit the community.

A resident-led community change initiative needs to *give residents a say* in all resource decisions. Many community members felt there was not enough community input into the decision to make IURD a technical assistance partner. Several years into the partnership, many of these residents see the value in what IURD does, but still resent the role it was given and express disapproval of the university partnership. Less has been accomplished

than might have been because so much time has gone into addressing concerns about the university's role.

The Haas Center was more readily accepted as a partner at least in part because it was welcomed and shown respect by the Community Development Institute (CDI). CDI set up a community organizing process for which inclusiveness and respect were core principles, applied also to the Haas Center. At every meeting Initiative leaders made it clear what the role of the Haas Center was and credited its contribution. It is important to add that, in general, the history of collaboration in West Oakland and East Palo Alto has been quite different, and that obstacles to collaboration in West Oakland have naturally extended to include IURD.

It takes time and preparation to understand what a university can do, formulate requests, and oversee projects. Without some financial support, most communities cannot staff this work and won't be able to effectively tap university resources. Organizing community participation in articulating research needs and carrying out research projects was possible because the Hewlett Foundation provided long-term support to its Neighborhood Improvement Initiative communities. *Funding both partners* separately is a small step that helped to balance power dynamics.

**Summary: Starting Points for a Foundation-Brokered Partnership between a University and a Community Initiative**

**I. Making Overtures to a University**

- Identify a center or institute within the university with the appropriate mission and interests, experience, and enthusiasm about the partnership opportunity.
- Get the buy-in of the provost or president, so that the center is better positioned to draw on university-wide resources.
- Involve university staff and faculty members who have had productive relationships with community organizations.
- Identify funding for the university center, especially in the beginning stages of the partnerships.

**II. Making Overtures to a Community Change Initiative**

- Identify an accepted, credible community leader who sees the potential in a university partnership.
- Build on existing relationships between community members, students and faculty.
- Build some common experiences and language through joint projects or events.
- Give residents a choice of technical assistance partners.
- Identify funding for community participation.

***III. Aligning Values and Beliefs***

Shared values and beliefs can sustain a university-community partnership when there are misunderstandings and disagreements about process or product. It is preferable to surface and explore these beliefs together up front. This happened in East Palo Alto, but not in West Oakland. The Peninsula Community Foundation, Community Development Institute

(CDI), and the Haas Center staff had a full-day retreat before they agreed to work together, to explore the values and guiding principles for their potential relationship. The different experiences of East Palo Alto and West Oakland illustrates how important shared values are, how difficult it is to translate them into practice, and what happens when the translation is imperfect.

*Mutual appreciation and respect* enables partners to thoughtfully consider each other's ideas and give each other the benefit of the doubt. East Palo Alto community leaders recognized early on that Stanford University had resources and information of value to the community. A number of active residents were graduates of the university. As important, these community leaders believed that the Haas Center appreciated the talent and experience in the community and was willing to play a supporting role. Therefore, community leaders came to the table with optimism rather than skepticism, and the Haas Center did not let them down. Residents who have participated in One East Palo Alto believe that the Haas Center has found better ways to integrate students, faculty, and staff in working with the community. Residents feel that they are heard and that their knowledge is understood and valued. However, while rare, when there are frustrating situations, residents occasionally accuse Stanford University staff and students of being outsiders.

It has been harder for the 7th Street/McClymonds Corridor Initiative and UC Berkeley to get past the skepticism. Some time is spent at each Initiative meeting criticizing UC Berkeley. One reason is that residents were not part of the decision to choose IURD as a partner, nor did the two groups have time to explore values together. In addition, some residents sense that the university is in a teaching mode or is pressing an agenda. This may be in part because IURD's contract holds it accountable for a set number of research projects per year, a provision that IURD works hard to meet. It probably also is a reflection of the philosophy of some senior staff at IURD. Both IURD staff and several Initiative board members are trying to address these concerns. They believe the way to get past resentment of the university is through a combination of much broader education about the value of what the university is offering the community and more opportunities for local residents to learn to do the research and analysis. It will take a concerted leadership effort to make this happen.

*Shared belief in bottom-up community change* helps ensure that joint projects will be designed to build community capacity. Even so, there can be differences in approach that raise questions about commitment. For example, community organizers working at the grass roots tend to have a more fluid culture that relies on immediate action. Large institutions, such as universities, are usually bound by more rigid and defined policies and procedures. At times, it seems to the East Palo Alto community that everything at Stanford University has to be planned down to the last detail, especially to ensure that there are not political ramifications. Beyond having a common belief in community empowerment, each partner has to understand what the other requires to function in the partnership and to be creative in meeting the needs of both.

*The missions* of the university centers *need to fit* with a community-led approach to community improvement. The missions of the community initiatives need to be broadly

inclusive, making space for a university partner. IURD sees its mission as serving as a community conduit to the resources of the campus—faculty, graduate students in professional programs, undergraduate student volunteers, and other campus outreach programs. The Haas Center has staked its spot as the place at Stanford University that is community driven, but that is imbedded in the basic research mission and culture of the university.

A partnership between a large institution and a smaller one with fewer resources can create tremendously unequal power relationships. However, there are ways to manage these relationships to minimize conflicts that may surface.

At both Stanford and Berkeley, university personnel approach their work with *sensitivity to the power imbalance*. For example, Haas Center staff did not actively offer research services in the first year of the partnership; they waited for community members to be ready to formulate the questions. The philosophy of the Haas Center director is to work with community groups that are capable of telling it to get out of the way. Building on this philosophy, the Haas Center has developed principles of community service for ethical, effective, and safe interaction. The principles include serving with an attitude of listening and learning from community participants. Field staff from IURD at Berkeley have worked hard to be very responsive to community members. When community members make requests for information, IURD staff take time away from current research projects to answer the questions. When community members ask for a role in research projects, IURD staff work hard to create one.

A key challenge in aligning values is *dealing with race and class*. Issues of race and class play out at multiple levels in both West Oakland and East Palo Alto. A Hispanic resident forms deeper relationships with Hispanic students. A white university member, well liked in the community, still believes that it is harder for her to connect because she is white. A low-income resident finds interacting with students who share his life experiences more valuable. On the one hand, community members wonder why they can't be taught to do the legal research themselves for a project, while on the other university staff struggle with how to impart skills that require years of education to master.

While perceptions about race and class have to be addressed, it is critical that the burden to do so not fall only on community members or university staff members of color. Everyone needs to see it as his or her responsibility to raise these issues and to ensure that they are discussed in a dignified way. The premise must be that although people are not going to resolve these issues before they move forward, they can acknowledge the assumptions and how they influence the way people talk and the things they consider important.

As a first step, the Haas Center made a special effort to recruit students who were not from wealthy families and who were not white. Many were from low-income families. Some lived in East Palo Alto. Some Haas staff are people of color. According to the San Francisco Foundation and the executive director of the 7th Street/McClymonds Corridor Initiative, working in a diverse multicultural community, it would help if the IURD staff and students were more diverse.

Community change initiatives are long-term, difficult processes. The university partners have shown *a willingness to stick it out*. The IURD community specialist believes that it will take time to see the tangible results of her efforts. Haas Center staff train students to understand that they cannot expect to see immediate results from their work in the community. The Haas Center also works on ensuring that community partnerships are put or kept on agendas throughout the university, including the Faculty Senate, the Office of Student Affairs, and the president's and provost's offices. The Haas Center has a long-term approach to improving the overall institutional commitment to community involvement and community partnerships.

There are natural spurts and lulls in activity in a community process, which requires *flexibility and compromise* on both sides and a continual effort to find the best outcome for both partners. Some Initiative leaders have been frustrated when the universities could not immediately respond to requests for help during the summer or in the middle of a term. In West Oakland, some leaders also have felt pressured to bring a student into a process prematurely because it was the beginning of a term or a student needed to complete a project to graduate. Timing issues also create problems for university faculty and students. For example, a professor planned a studio class to work with the 7th Street/McClymonds Corridor Initiative on implementation of the community plan. However, at the start of the term the community was not ready to begin implementing the plan.

When asked what they would like to see happen next with the university-community partnership, participants in both East Palo Alto and West Oakland expressed the hope that all of the partners can stay flexible as the relationships evolve. They know that needs will change, even if they cannot say yet how they will change.

Summary: Values Needed to Build a Strong University-Community Partnership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mutual appreciation and respect.</li> <li>• Shared set of beliefs.</li> <li>• Compatible missions.</li> <li>• Sensitivity to the power inequalities.</li> <li>• Sensitivity to race and class.</li> <li>• Ability to make a long-term commitment.</li> <li>• Flexibility on both sides.</li> </ul>

## Building a Sustainable Partnership: Policies and Procedures

Starting with a similar set of values helps to guide a university-community partnership, but it is still important to put in place procedures and structures that embody the values. The experiences in East Palo Alto and West Oakland suggest some key policies and procedures that build toward a sustainable partnership. These include steps for the community, the university, and a foundation funder, as well as steps that must be taken together.

### ***I. Community Policies and Procedures***

The Community Development Institute (CDI), the Peninsula Foundation, and the board chair and executive director of One East Palo Alto set a tone that Stanford University was a central and respected partner. They showed their support for the Haas Center's presence and recognized the Center's contributions. Their support helped to *demonstrate that the university had a role and is welcome*. In West Oakland, for many reasons—no community partner like the Community Development Institute, a period of transition in staffing at the San Francisco Foundation, less support from Initiative staff—IURD was left much more to fend for itself. At meetings no one explains why IURD is present or publicly recognizes its contribution.

Continually reiterating the university's role also is important because a community process is likely to experience significant turnover in participation. It is hard to fulfill a mandate when the participants keep changing. Initiative leaders who support the university's approach and remind people of past decisions help to get past this hurdle.

The initiative leaders need to work with community members to help them understand what the university can do, as well as what they can teach the university. The community needs to *cultivate people who understand how to navigate the university to get what the community needs*. For example, the director of the Alliance for West Oakland Development has asked for immediate help on transit village development. At the same time, he is thinking ahead about additional ways that IURD could help with federal grants, set up mentoring programs, and be more of a partner in development. In West Oakland, community members also found they needed reminding that it was their responsibility to lead the process rather than leave decisions about agendas and research to students and faculty.

Community Initiative leaders need to *manage expectations*, to make sure participants understand not only the strengths of a university but also its limitations. It can be difficult to recruit prominent faculty to participate in applied research. If university staff takes on an unfamiliar piece of research, there may be false starts. Students and faculty tend to disappear in the summer, and to be busier at the beginning and end of terms. It is easier to identify good students if there is some advanced notice of need. It is helpful if meeting locations and times can be set in advance, allowing arrangements to be made for student transportation.



Initiative leaders from the community need to *be involved in designing and providing training for faculty and students* who will work in the community. Students will work much more effectively if they understand both the history of the projects and the attitudes of the community participants with whom they will be working.

University staff respond positively when Initiative leaders *give the university timely feedback* about what they want, how they want to work together, and what is working and not working. The more feedback the community gives, the easier it is for the university to stay on track.

## ***II. University Policies and Procedures***

The university partner needs to *play a set of crucial brokering roles*. The Haas Center and IURD attend board and work group meetings to surface needs. They keep a running list of explicit and implied needs, which they discuss and prioritize with Initiative leaders. They recruit students and faculty. They coordinate involvement and prepare students to participate. They provide space, computers, and administrative support for students working for the community initiatives. IURD also arrange for space for staff and students to work in the 7th Street/McClymonds Corridor Initiative offices. They watch over student involvement to ensure it serves the community. They receive and channel community feedback about what works and does not work. (How IURD and the Haas Center have mined the human resources of their university is the subject of the next section of this paper.)

Once the Initiatives hired executive directors and additional staff, the process changed somewhat. The new executive directors encouraged Initiative participants to funnel requests through them and encouraged the universities to take a lower profile at meetings. It still is valuable that someone from the university attends work group meetings, which focus on particular issues and projects, with an eye to coaxing out technical assistance needs. The experience at both sites has been that working groups make good clients for university research projects.

The university center needs to *hire staff who can connect well with community members*, and it must hire sufficient staff to effectively play its brokering role. Community members feel very comfortable with the outreach coordinators for the Haas Center and IURD, both of whom are young professionals with a passion for working with the community and with students. They are caring people who can help other people open up.

The Haas Center and IURD have struggled to figure out the best way to staff their role in the Neighborhood Improvement Initiatives. They agree on the need for a point person who maintains relationships throughout the community, a person who manages relationships with the faculty and the administration, and a person who coordinates and oversees research projects. In addition, there are likely to be faculty advisors for each research project, graduate student researchers working part time, and undergraduate student interns providing general support.

Maintaining adequate staffing levels for the Haas Center's work has been extremely challenging given the need for unique individuals capable of working within the university and community contexts, as well as within the university's own human resources infrastructure. Limited in its ability to hire the people it needs in an efficient manner, the Haas Center has had to rely on too few people.

A university partner needs to *allocate substantial time to building relationships in the community*. A lot of this effort is social. Staff at both the Haas Center and IURD went to almost every Initiative meeting and community event. They intermingled with residents, checked if residents had questions or concerns, and generally helped them feel comfortable.

Students have a key role to play in relationship building. Many of the most positive relationships between UC Berkeley and the 7th Street/McClymonds Corridor Initiative started with students who were open to learning and enthusiastic. Also in East Palo Alto, the enormous commitment of students to stick with the planning process helped cement relationships with the community.

A university technical assistance partner to a community change initiative may end up with a range of clients, including the leadership of the community initiative, other community members who may ask for help, and, perhaps, a third-party funder. Both the Haas Center and IURD have foundation contracts for their work with the Initiatives, creating direct accountability to the foundations. It is very helpful if all of the clients *understand the potential for conflict and agree on how it will be handled*. If, as is the case for the Hewlett Foundation's Neighborhood Improvement Initiative, residents are intended to be the key decisionmakers, it may be best if all the partners agree that the Initiative's board is the primary client.

There is potential for conflict when a university partner is asked to help specific participants in the Initiative or to work on unrelated projects in the community. It would be counterproductive to avoid having multiple clients in the community, but at least the clients' goals must all be aligned, and the Initiative's leadership needs to know about all of the projects and, hopefully, feel comfortable with them.

There also is potential for conflict when the university takes on a project that directly serves both the community and the foundation that is funding the university's involvement. There has been uncertainty and conflict in both East Palo Alto and West Oakland concerning the development of a system for tracking progress of the Initiatives. Developing this system was a requirement of being a Hewlett Foundation Initiative site, and both IURD and the Haas Center had this task in their contracts. However, as it turned out, there was inconsistency between the community and the foundation about the focus of a tracking system to measure progress of the Initiative. Because there was no agreement about how to respond to both the community and the foundation in this situation, time was lost and participants were frustrated.

When the 7th Street/McClymonds Corridor Initiative was designed, the expectation was that the community foundation managing partner, Initiative board members, and Initiative

staff would take the lead in championing a tracking system and would invite IURD to help with the design and implementation. For a number of reasons, including staff turnover, lack of time, and, perhaps most importantly, lack of real interest, this did not happen. Community members preferred a consultative process, where IURD bore the brunt of the work with periodic community feedback. Therefore, when IURD presented a tracking system to the Initiative's board and community members, many residents rejected it and even the notion that the community needed this kind of system for tracking progress. The Hewlett Foundation also felt the system did not meet its needs.

The Haas Center, with stronger support from its community partners, was able to design a more collaborative process for developing the One East Palo Alto tracking system. The resulting tracking system pleased most residents, but did not focus enough on outcomes, which the Hewlett Foundation required. The discussion about whether the tracking system is adequate and who is the customer has continued for more than a year. Now that it is becoming clearer to the community that the foundation has specific requirements that must be met, most participants believe there will be a workable resolution.

Two characteristics of community change initiatives are allowing residents to lead and building community capacity. This means that faculty and students must *come up with participatory research designs that also build skills in the community*. A participatory process also pays off for the university. When IURD staff and student interns presented progress indicators that IURD had developed to the board in West Oakland, people who had not been involved in the process of developing them initially rejected them. Residents who were part of the original board discussion of the indicators strategy or who had been interviewed as part of the process of developing indicators were more supportive.

It takes intentional planning to produce collaborative research. Both the Haas Center and IURD have had successes. Still, it can be more demanding to develop participatory designs. IURD, which has undertaken many more research projects for the Initiative than has the Haas Center, finds it a continuing challenge.

The Haas Center's approach to the development of the progress tracking system is a good example of a participatory project. The Haas Center began by working with Initiative leaders to articulate principles for the project, including that community members would identify and select indicators that are meaningful to them and for which it would be straightforward for them to assemble and revise the data. All of the partners agreed that adhering to these principles would require an extensive process to educate and engage residents. The key vehicle for this work was the Evaluation Task Force.

### **The Haas Center's Evaluation Task Force**

The Haas Center launched an Evaluation Task Force, including an active working group of eight to nine residents and three to four local technical assistance providers, to lead the process of developing a system for tracking Initiative progress. Between February and June 2001, the Evaluation Task Force held six meetings, each attended by fifteen to eighteen residents. Participants learned about evaluation and prepared for two community evaluation roundtables to solicit wider community input. Haas Center staff and community members facilitated one community roundtable in March 2001, at which forty residents, including eleven youth, produced a first cut of sixty-eight community indicators. This was followed by a second community roundtable in early June. Task force members became advocates for the work of the Haas Center. The Initiative's board quickly adopted the indicators. According to the Initiative's evaluators, Stanford's engagement with East Palo Alto residents on the Evaluation Task Force was "a breakthrough in relations between the affluent, private university and this low-income community..."<sup>6</sup>

In West Oakland, community members felt that they built capacity when UC Berkeley planning students helped create a design for transit-oriented development at Mandela Village. The students worked with a local organization from the ground up to develop a plan to implement what the community wanted. Community members also felt that they built research skills when IURD trained and employed eleven community members as part of the "Check It Out" team to conduct a community visual survey and collect perception surveys. Survey teams included community members, a student, and IURD staff, and by all accounts the survey project was a success.

It must be a principle of university involvement that the *university avoids making decisions for the community*. The integrity of a community change process depends upon the community's making its own decisions. In West Oakland, residents have from time to time asked IURD to make decisions, and IURD has gotten close to taking positions when the community asked. The way to ensure that community residents build capacity to make decisions is to give participants in the Initiative the confidence, resources, and opportunities to do so.

The university has to deliver on each of its commitments. Many residents in West Oakland can recall in detail the long history of government initiatives to improve life in West Oakland. These partnerships with outside agencies generally petered out, which has made people skeptical about relying on outsiders. To make it easier to *show follow-through on commitments*, the university should operate with explicit expectations about activities, timetables, and reporting requirements. In general, community members have commented favorably on how IURD is delivering on its commitments.

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<sup>6</sup> "Teamworks, One East Palo Alto Neighborhood Improvement Initiative, Final Report: First-Year Implementation", for the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, June 2001.

### ***III. Foundation Policies and Procedures***

A foundation that has brokered and funded a university-community partnership has a continuing role to play in ensuring that expectations among the partners are clear, performance measures are useful, the quality of performance is the basis for continued funding of the partnership, and new funding sources are identified.

The foundation must be very specific with both the community and the university about *minimum requirements for projects* in the contract with the university. While designing a tracking system and progress indicators seemed to the Hewlett Foundation a straightforward task, it was interpreted in very different ways by each of the partners. Three years into the six-year Initiative, the Foundation did not have the measures of progress it felt it needed.

Especially important university projects that are time sensitive are likely to need targeted funding. The Hewlett Foundation had hoped that the universities could use their research capacity to help the Initiatives choose among competing projects based upon their potential contribution to achieving community goals. Both universities did draw on their GIS labs and other capacities. However, there was no special priority or funding for this work, and the work proceeded much more slowly than the planning process.

The foundation should only *put tasks into the university contract that have the support of the Initiative leadership*. University-community partnerships succeed when participants build trust. If the foundation assigns to the university projects that the community does not support, it can erode that trust. The San Francisco Foundation initially asked IURD to create a system for it to evaluate grantees of the 7th Street/McClymonds Corridor Initiative. When the Foundation and IURD saw that playing this evaluation role made it hard for IURD to provide technical assistance to the grantees, they agreed that IURD should withdraw from the evaluation process.

The foundation should *spend time with the partners choosing performance requirements with care*. Performance measures give the university and community a clear idea of what is considered a successful partnership. They should include satisfaction of the leaders of, and the participants in, the community initiative with the university, as well as deliverables the foundation must have.

A foundation should make sure that the *university has the capacity to deliver on critical projects*. It may need to ask the university what resources it can draw upon to complete the agreed-upon tasks. It is a mistake to assume that a large research university can complete any research project within the time frame a community process requires. Universities have vast human resources, but they can be difficult to translate for community work. In particular, there is a vast difference between basic research and applied research. To be effective at applied research, a basic research university requires an infrastructure for translating basic research into more immediately useful information.

#### ***IV. Joint Agreements and Understandings***

The Haas Center, the Peninsula Foundation, and Community Development Institute established *agreed-upon principles for working together*, which they believe were key to the success of their relationship. The overarching principle was that they would stay partners and solve problems, rather than let problems dissolve the partnership. A second principle was inclusiveness, including honor and respect for everyone involved in the Initiative. The partners also agreed that where a partner has an area of expertise, the others would yield to its judgment. Recognizing the power imbalance, they agreed not to exert power over each other, or to make decisions for the community.

In addition to establishing principles for working together, the Initiative partners also *set up a process for working together*. Regular partner meetings make it easier to design good projects, set manageable expectations, and avoid misunderstandings. The One East Palo Alto partnership structure has worked particularly well. A policy team made up of senior people from One East Palo Alto, the Peninsula Community Foundation, the Haas Center, and the Community Development Institute has met biweekly. An operational work partners team, which includes many other staff from the partner organizations, has met weekly. If the Hewlett Foundation had participated in these planning meetings on some regular basis, perhaps semiannually, the problems with the progress tracking system might have surfaced and been worked out sooner.

Recently, the Haas Center created a Community-Based Research Institute to develop partnerships between Stanford faculty, staff, and students with the East Palo Alto community. The Center used OEPA funds to hire a community research specialist to lead the Institute, which has an advisory board of faculty and community advisors. It is too early to say how well it will work.

The 7th Street/McClymonds Corridor Initiative evolved a more ad hoc approach to providing guidance to IURD, one that has been less successful. For a while, IURD received most of its direction from the San Francisco Foundation, the managing partner for the Initiative, with some feedback from the executive director of the Initiative. This worked fairly well until the San Francisco Foundation staff person left and was not immediately replaced. IURD moved forward under its contract with very little direction from the Initiative. Now the executive director of the 7th Street/McClymonds Corridor Initiative, IURD staff, and the new staff person at the San Francisco Foundation meet every other week, which has improved communication. The San Francisco Foundation would like to see a core group of board members join these regular meetings to ensure that the board knows what IURD is working on and will support IURD at board and community meetings.

The 7th Street/McClymonds Corridor Initiative did start out with a more systematic joint approach to identifying research needs, a Research Coordinating Committee (RCC).

#### IURD's Research Coordinating Council

IURD's Research Coordinating Council was formed to review and assess the utility of all research proposals and prioritize technical assistance projects. Members included IURD staff, UC Berkeley faculty, three representatives from the 7th Street/McClymonds Corridor Initiative governing board, and student interns. The intention was that the Initiative's governing board representatives would report on UC Berkeley work to the rest of the governing board and make recommendations for the collaboration. Residents who participated liked the RCC and thought it was effective in building trust with the university.

However, as time passed, only a few representatives of the Initiative came to each RCC meeting and IURD staff had established relationships with Initiative board members who provided constant feedback on research needs. Because there were already so many Initiative meetings, the 7th Street/McClymonds Corridor Initiative executive director decided it would be more efficient to have a smaller research decision group consisting of IURD, the San Francisco Foundation, and him. Even though the new approach was less time consuming, it has contributed to ongoing tension with the members of the board who are less supportive of IURD's role in the Initiative. If the Research Coordinating Committee had not been disbanded, or if it had been expanded to include members of the Initiative working groups, Initiative members today might feel more supportive of IURD's role in the Initiative.

### **Summary: Building a Sustainable Partnership: Policies and Procedures**

#### **I. Community Policies and Procedures**

- Demonstrate to the rest of the community that the university is welcome, has a role, and makes a positive contribution.
- Cultivate the skills to utilize university resources.
- Manage community expectations of the university, acknowledging the university's infrastructure and resource limitations.
- Participate in educating faculty and students who will work in the community about the community's history and attitudes.
- Provide quick feedback to the university partner on what is and isn't working in the university-community partnership.

#### **II. University Policies and Procedures**

- Actively broker university resources.
- Hire enthusiastic outreach staff and sufficient staff to effectively play the brokering role.
- Allocate enough time for meetings and social events to build relationships with community members.
- Clarify with all participants how to handle conflicting client needs.
- Design inclusive research processes that help community members to develop new capacities.
- Help community participants to develop the confidence to make their own decisions, rather than making decisions for the community.
- Keep track of and follow through on all commitments.

#### **III. Policies and Procedures for a Foundation Funder**

- Spell out minimum requirements for both partners and make sure they are understood.
- Only put tasks in the university contract that have the support of Initiative leadership.
- Spend time with the partners choosing performance requirements that meet everyone's needs.
- Make sure the university has the capacity to deliver on critical projects.

#### **IV. Joint Agreements and Understandings**

- Establish principles for working together.
- Set up a process for working together, including regular partner meetings for all of the partners.



## **Translating the Policies into Action: Mining the Human Resources of a University for Community Change Initiatives**

What makes IURD and the Haas Center strong brokers of university human resources is the enormous planning and outreach they have undertaken to mine the resources of their university for the Initiatives. Both IURD and the Haas Center have been aggressive and systematic in increasing campus involvement in One East Palo Alto and the 7th Street/McClymonds Corridor Initiative. Their experience suggests some useful tools and strategies, including maintaining a database, targeting particular kinds of students, aggressively recruiting these students through events and meetings, cultivating relationships with faculty, providing incentives and support for faculty and students, orienting participating students, and creating learning and reflection opportunities for students.

### ***I. Maintaining a Database***

Databases and constant outreach allow the Haas Center and IURD to more quickly respond to requests from the community. IURD maintains a database of faculty and campus units with interests and skills relevant to the West Oakland community's needs. The database also describes community partners and their needs and interests. The Haas Center has an inventory of community service opportunities on campus and a database for tracking involvement of students, staff, and faculty in One East Palo Alto. The database is especially helpful because many opportunities for students to help arise quickly and can't be anticipated in advance. When the 7th Street/McClymonds Corridor Initiative's Community Development Work Group stated its desire to continue a dialogue about redevelopment that had begun in a spring studio class, IURD was able to immediately hire a city planning student to continue crafting strategies with the Initiative over the summer.

### ***II. Targeting Receptive Students Who Have Appropriate Skills***

Students who flourish best in community initiatives usually come from the community and return to it to share new skills. Other students can succeed, too, if they are good listeners who pick up the community's language quickly. Students need to be able to make community members comfortable with complex material, without being condescending, and should want to leave behind something more than their knowledge. It is also helpful if they reflect the ethnic diversity in the community.

Many of the students the Haas Center selected to work in East Palo Alto were already working with the NAACP, the Chicano Center, and other activist campus organizations. Recruiting these students helped bridge the substantial gap between Stanford and the East Palo Alto community and overcome resistance to the university's participation in the Initiative. The Haas Center also looks for students who believe there is a lot of talent in low-income communities, and filters out those students who don't seem to care enough about the seriousness of working in the community.

IURD seeks out graduate students who want to work in West Oakland and who often have experience doing research in complex community environments. A social welfare graduate student who worked on social service assessments had experience as a service provider in

Africa and in the United States. A planning student who worked on housing projects had already helped to develop 300 units of affordable housing using Section 8 financing in Humboldt County. Planning students have the most contact with IURD, so it is not surprising that IURD has selected more of them. However, IURD recognizes that the community has diverse needs and reaches out to students in many departments. It is attracting an increasing number of students in public health, business, law, and other programs.

### ***III. Aggressively Recruiting Students***

Both IURD and the Haas Center have heavily invested in student recruitment. The Haas Center recruited four student liaisons who spend ten hours per week for the academic year on outreach to other students and faculty. In one term, the liaisons might recruit thirty students. The Haas Center also has tried hard to make One East Palo Alto visible on campus through articles in its publication, a quarterly newsletter for students on the Initiative, presentations to classes, workshops at Stanford, and regular check-in with campus student groups. For example, it cosponsored with campus student groups a three-part Initiative Speaker Series on education, affordable housing, and economic development in East Palo Alto.

Each semester, IURD staff try to guess as early as possible what graduate student and faculty support the 7th Street/McClymonds Corridor Initiative will need to complete its research agenda, so that it can get the word out quickly to departments and hire some of the best students available. IURD reaches out to various departments, recruiting professors to teach studios and hiring students to work for IURD. Students also bring in other students.

<p align="center"><b>The Challenge of Engaging Students in Work That Does Not Use Their Most Advanced Academic Skills</b></p>
<p>At Stanford University, most of the students who have participated in the Initiative are undergraduate students, although the Haas Center did not deliberately seek to limit participation to undergraduates. This goes to the heart of the challenge Stanford faces in recruiting students to participate in community initiative work. Graduate students are on a track to become star-status academics, and supporting community resident organizing can seem a distraction from their work, unless it is at a legal clinic or free medical clinic. Undergraduate students more easily agree to fulfilling supportive roles in a community initiative.</p>
<p>This is not to say that it is easy to recruit undergraduate students. At Stanford University, what is worthy of undergraduate research are still the big picture research questions. Preparing an inventory of community housing would not be considered research worthy, and the student who ends up doing the counting will not receive the highest awards for undergraduate research. Students have to make deliberate sacrifices in opting to do altruistic public service.</p>

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#### ***IV. Cultivating Relationships with Faculty***

Faculty recruitment is a core part of both the Haas Center's and IURD's strategy. Faculty relationships with a variety of departments provide a pipeline to students, build support for community collaboration, and make it easier to replace a faculty leader who leaves or retires. It is especially important to connect to senior faculty, who have the power to change policy. Haas Center staff have met with faculty from more than fifteen departments and has held multiple faculty forums on new models of university-community collaboration. At these forums, staff collects information on faculty teaching, research, and personal interests. Staff looks especially for senior faculty on the academic council who have more freedom to participate and more experience leading others. Haas Center staff also work with faculty on ways to use One East Palo Alto tools and materials in their classes. For example, a group of teaching assistants in one education course looked at One East Palo Alto as a model for developing background information on communities.

#### ***V. Providing Incentives and Supports for Faculty and Students***

Even faculty who are interested in community issues need to see that there are rewards and supports for this kind of work. At many research universities, research is strictly defined and supported as the creation of new knowledge and the production of a formal product. Most community requests for research do not fit this mold and, therefore, would not be associated with publication and tenure.

Stanford University values community service and participatory research more than many other basic research universities. Still, support for this kind of work has its limits. Many on campus think volunteering for service projects is commendable, but still represents time away from learning. The Haas Center has addressed this issue somewhat through the Public Service Scholars Program and the promotion of service-learning courses at Stanford, but these activities are limited in the number of students they can serve. It should help a little that the Stanford University vice provost for undergraduate education has made available a fund to encourage faculty to develop service-learning and research projects of benefit to the community. This fund begins to send the message that it is acceptable for students and faculty to be involved in some research that is not cutting-edge by basic research standards.

The situation is a little better for faculty at UC Berkeley, where applied learning is more accepted and there are dozens of classes that include fieldwork. However, faculty time spent supporting a community process usually does not count in tenure decisions.

Faculty also need help covering the extra costs of working in the community. A professor at Stanford University has obtained funding from the Haas Center and through his own efforts to hire a course assistant (a student who took his class the year before) to identify and reconfirm placements in East Palo Alto. The professor at UC Berkeley who has taught three studio classes working with West Oakland got started the first year with a limited grant available to faculty in his department to pay for transportation for students and supplies. (Transportation is a crucial issue for students' participation. It is not easy to get dozens of students who don't have cars to East Palo Alto and back, especially late in the evening.)

## ***VI. Orienting Students***

Although many student volunteers were involved in some kind of community service in high school, very few of them have experience in community development. It is a very different experience tutoring a child in reading or math, where the goal and progress toward it are obvious, and spending months taking notes or translating at meetings, where the goal—empowering residents to make changes in their community—is much more difficult to quantify and progress toward it often impossible to recognize. It is often challenging for students to grasp and be comfortable with the idea that community development is more about empowering others to make decisions that shape their community as they would like it to be than it is about imposing someone else’s ideas or some application of technology to shape the future of that community. Therefore, students need to be prepared for work in the community.

The Haas Center provides training for all students and staff who work with One East Palo Alto that includes a student orientation every semester, a background information packet, viewing the film *Dreams of a City*, and participating in a discussion group about what is community development and empowerment. Students who have been working in the community talk to new volunteers about a range of topics, such as how to build trust (hanging out at a festival is better than sending a memo) and how to write for the audience (be straightforward and don’t patronize).

Students who participate in the 7th Street/McClymonds Corridor Initiative also receive information about the community and read the community plan before they go out into the community. Many students attend a few community meetings, sitting in the back and listening, before they take on an assignment. Community members believe it is critical that students hear from members of the community about their experiences first on campus and, then, in the community at people’s homes and at meetings. They emphasize that students need this kind of orientation more than once, so they don’t lose sight of the fact that this is not an abstract exercise. Once they have an assignment, IURD staff make sure students understand the assignment and where in the university to go for help and resources.

## ***VII. Creating Learning Opportunities for Students***

Work with community initiatives creates valuable learning opportunities if there is time to reflect on and articulate lessons. The Haas Center holds a monthly lunch for all students working in the community, where they get a chance to debrief, reflect on their experiences, and connect their community work with their class work. Since ninety percent of undergraduate students are on meal plans, and they can’t afford to miss a meal, providing food makes it easier for students attend workshops and other meetings. Activities include individual written reflections and group activities. For example, the Haas Center created a directed reading course for students to assist them in translating their experience into an academic context. The Center also advises Stanford students about classes that address issues raised by the Initiative’s work.

Stanford University professors who offer service-learning classes also try to create means for reflection on students’ work in the community. One professor in his urban policy

seminar uses theory and history to explore and explain current challenges in East Palo Alto. Each of his students must serve in an internship seven hours per week for ten weeks, with the option to continue for another ten weeks. For a third of each class, the students discuss how theory relates to the community of East Palo Alto and their internship placements. The students also write weekly journal entries, which the professor reviews and comments on each week, asking students to respond to questions in the next week. He finds it is difficult for students to make the link between theory and what might work in the community, reinforcing the need for an intentional learning process.

**Summary: Mining the Human Resources of a University for Community Change Initiatives**

- Maintain a database of faculty and campus units, for quick responses to community requests.
- Target ethnically diverse students who have community work experience, relevant skills, and a positive and respectful attitude.
- Aggressively recruit students using student liaisons, publications, workshops, and outreach to campus student groups.
- Cultivate relationships with faculty who can provide a pipeline to students, broaden support for community collaboration, and help to change policy.
- Provide incentives and supports, including money and transportation, for faculty and students so that community work is seen as acceptable, if not valuable, on campus.
- Prepare students with background information, discussions of community development and empowerment, and forums with community leaders and students already working in the community.
- Create meaningful learning opportunities for students, to debrief, reflect on their experiences, and connect their Initiative experience with their class work.

## Conclusion

With a high level of commitment and creative thinking, there are many ways for a university-community partnership to serve the technical assistance and support needs of a community initiative. This monograph has revealed the significant value added of university-community partnerships with One East Palo Alto and the 7th Street/McClymonds Corridor Neighborhood Improvement Initiative. For the communities, the value added ranges from better community plans to new community capacities. For the universities, the value added ranges from better learning experiences for students to an opportunity to reinvent service learning and community partnership within a research university. The partners have had ample opportunity to experience the limitations of a university partnership for technical assistance, but still feel that the partnerships have been productive.

This monograph also has recounted the huge amount of time and hard work required to implement a productive university-community partnership. It takes time for a university to understand a community and figure out useful ways to respond to needs. Mobilizing and delivering volunteer labor takes far more time, more than is likely to be covered by funding for the partnership. It also takes time for a community to understand what a university can do and how to ask for help and manage the assistance that is offered. Everyone can feel squeezed in what is likely to already be an overwhelming community process.

However, the fundamental work involved is the same work that any strong partnership requires. A few points stand out, all of which are basic to good partnership building:

- *Surface values with the intent of building a truly respectful relationship.* Early in his paper, “The Roles of Universities in Community-Building Initiatives” Victor Rubin suggests that there is a need to operate on a more mutually respectful level.<sup>7</sup> Building a truly respectful relationship is a much harder and more profound task than it often seems. It touches on every aspect of the partnership, from early negotiations through training for all participants, adoption of principles and procedures governing the work together, selection of joint activities, collaborative design of the activities, and quality control and reflection on the partnership.
- *Adopt policies and procedures that embody the values of the partnership.* The contrasting experiences of One East Palo Alto and the 7th Street/McClymonds Corridor Neighborhood Improvement Initiative affirm how important these steps are. Community initiative leaders must feel and show support for the university’s role; work with community members to understand what the university can do (including its limitations), as well as what they can teach the university; participate in training for faculty and students to prepare them to be effective community partners; and provide timely feedback to the university. University leaders must

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<sup>7</sup> Victor Rubin, “The Roles of Universities in Community-Building Initiatives,” *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, vol. 17, no. 4, Summer 1998.

hire staff who connect well with the community; commit to having a constant presence in the community; adopt principles for ensuring that community members make their own decisions; create project development processes that result in inclusive research that helps community members develop new capacities; and establish accountability systems to ensure follow-through on commitments. The partners need to agree on principles for working together and establish regular partner meetings for checking in on progress and agreeing on next steps.

- *Anticipate where conflicting agendas may emerge and agree on how they will be handled.* Differences can arise between the Initiative and other community projects that invite university participation. There also can be differences in needs between Initiative leaders and foundation funders. Misunderstandings and differing needs for the progress tracking system have absorbed a large chunk of time for all of the partners in One East Palo Alto and the 7th Street/McClymonds Corridor Neighborhood Improvement Initiative. Only now that participants are beginning to clarify what they need is there a sense of forward motion.
- *Be flexible.* When asked about the future of the university-community partnerships, participants don't agree. Some see a continuing and expanding role for the university, supporting more community projects that are part of the Initiative. Some see a decreasing role, as community members become able to meet their own needs for technical and process capacity. Most hope that all of the partners can stay flexible and accept a natural evolution of the partnership. These university-community partnerships are covering new ground and confronting continuing challenges. There is no obvious right answer as to the next steps.

## **Exhibit A**

### **Background on the Three Neighborhood Improvement Initiative Sites**

The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation's Neighborhood Improvement Initiative (NII) is a resident-led, seven-year effort to improve the physical, economic, and social conditions of three neighborhoods in the San Francisco Bay Area. Three areas were selected as Neighborhood Improvement Initiative sites: Mid-Town/University Garden Village Corridor in East Palo Alto; 7<sup>th</sup> Street/McClymonds Corridor in West Oakland; and Mayfair in east San Jose.

#### ***The Mid-Town/University Garden Park Village Corridor in East Palo Alto***

The Mid-Town/University Garden Park Village Corridor in East Palo Alto was the third site that the Hewlett Foundation selected for its Neighborhood Improvement Initiative. It was chosen in spite of enormous challenges because of the increasing risk that residents would be pushed out by development from Silicon Valley. The hope was that residents could marshal new resources coming to the community to secure their future in the community.<sup>8</sup> The community includes the Mid-Town, University Garden, Village Park, and Palo Alto Park neighborhoods. The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation awarded a planning grant for the East Palo Alto Neighborhood Improvement Initiative in July 1999.

East Palo Alto is a small town where the school district is the largest employer. There is no chamber of commerce and a low tax base. An incorporation effort in 1983 made what had once been a part of more affluent Palo Alto into a separate city. The incorporation campaign created a coalition that has worked together to make city government effective and set the stage for further collaborative work.<sup>9</sup>

This ability to work together has been carried into the East Palo Alto Neighborhood Improvement Initiative. While historically the black population has controlled the political agenda, the founders of the East Palo Alto Neighborhood Improvement Initiative decided that the board should have equal membership for African Americans and Latinos, and set aside a specified number of seats for Asian/Pacific Islanders, Euroamericans, and youth. Gender balance was also considered.<sup>10</sup>

The Mid-Town/University Garden Park Village Corridor is an area of 10,000 mostly African American and Latino residents in East Palo Alto. About 20 percent live below the

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<sup>8</sup> "Teamworks, One East Palo Alto Neighborhood Improvement Initiative," Final Report: First Year Implementation, for the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, June 2001.

<sup>9</sup> "Neighborhood Renewal: Our Story," Progress Report, Neighborhood Improvement Initiative, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, August 2000.

<sup>10</sup> "Teamworks, One East Palo Alto Neighborhood Improvement Initiative," Final Report: First Year Implementation, for the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, June 2001.



poverty level and more than 30 percent of adults are unemployed. The homeowners are principally black, while Latinos are newcomers and are mainly renters.<sup>11</sup>

The Peninsula Community Foundation was selected as the managing partner for the East Palo Alto Initiative, working with neighborhood residents to develop a plan and form a Neighborhood Collaborative to govern the Initiative. The Community Development Institute was responsible for organizing, convening, and working with residents to develop the neighborhood revitalization plan. The Haas Center for Public Service at Stanford University was charged with providing research support and students to staff the process.

During the planning process, resident planning groups proposed modest projects to produce an immediate impact and worked through plans for each of ten topics, including family and community life, education, safety, housing, and economic development. Attendance at planning meetings averaged 140 residents. The planning groups came up with thirty-nine projects for implementation. Projects included training and certifying health and human services workers by working with San Mateo County offices and other nonprofits, launching a help-line and website; and building medium-income housing.<sup>12</sup> By June 2001, residents had elected a twenty-three-member board of directors and hired an executive director for One East Palo Alto. Working groups are hard at work, grants have been made to community projects, and many projects are under way.<sup>13</sup>

### ***The 7th Street/McClymonds Corridor in West Oakland***

The 7th Street/McClymonds Corridor in West Oakland was the second site that the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation selected for the Neighborhood Improvement Initiative. It was chosen because it had good potential for connecting to resources, a diverse nonprofit sector, and a government that has long struggled to overcome poor public perceptions.<sup>14</sup> The West Oakland site received a NII planning grant in spring 1998 and began implementing its strategic plan in July 1999.<sup>15</sup>

A changing economy and a traumatic earthquake, which violently damaged the community, has battered West Oakland. This is the area where the Cypress Freeway collapsed in the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake. The 7th Street/McClymonds Corridor includes portions of seven West Oakland neighborhoods with 13,000 residents, most of them African Americans with growing numbers of Asian Americans and Latinos. The population is 71 percent African American, 12.35 percent Hispanic, 8.2 percent Caucasian, 7.5 percent

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<sup>11</sup> Teamworks, One East Palo Alto Neighborhood Improvement Initiative, Final Report: First Year Implementation for the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, June 2001.

<sup>12</sup> A Bridge to the Future: 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Cross-Site Retreat of the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation's Neighborhood Improvement Initiative, November 17-18, 2000.

<sup>13</sup> Teamworks, One East Palo Alto Neighborhood Improvement Initiative, Final Report: First Year Implementation for the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, June 2001.

<sup>14</sup> Teamworks, 7<sup>th</sup> Street/McClymonds Corridor Neighborhood Improvement Initiative, Final Report: Year One Implementation for the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, December 2000.

<sup>15</sup> Teamworks, 7<sup>th</sup> Street/McClymonds Corridor Neighborhood Improvement Initiative, Final Report: Year One Implementation for the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, December 2000.

Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1 percent Native American.<sup>16</sup> About 40 percent of area families live in poverty. West Oakland property values are rising rapidly, threatening to displace longtime residents.<sup>17</sup>

West Oakland is known for its strong community activism, but also for the difficulties community groups have in working together. The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation decided to ask the San Francisco Foundation to be both the managing partner and the lead agency for this Initiative. With so many competing organizations in West Oakland, this seemed the best way to avoid anointing one organization and thereby upsetting all the others.<sup>18</sup> Over time, the Initiative began to build a cooperative relationship with the University of California at Berkeley. The Institute of Urban and Regional Development at UC Berkeley became a significant technical assistance partner.

At the beginning, about forty West Oakland residents began meeting nearly nightly to draft a plan. A kickoff event in November 1998 drew 380 people. Meetings thereafter averaged 100 people. Neighborhood residents came up with a revitalization plan that targets nine program areas: seniors; youth; children and family development; health and social services; public safety and crime reduction; housing; economic and job development; arts, culture, and education; land use and environment; infrastructure, telecommunications, and transportation; and community building. The first projects implemented were a neighborhood newsletter, playground equipment and computers for a day care program, tree planting, and landscaping by local youth for the elderly.

In October 2000, the resident-led groups elected a twenty-member board of directors, hired an executive director, and filed for nonprofit status.<sup>19</sup> The Initiative was truly under way. Since then, it has worked hard to implement the projects in its revitalization plan and to organize additional community support and involvement.

### ***Mayfair***

The Mayfair neighborhood on the east side of San Jose was the first site selected by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation's Neighborhood Improvement Initiative. It was selected because the community had a long history of activism and a strong human service agency that could serve as lead agency. It also had potential to tap the resources of the City of San Jose, which was committed to neighborhood renewal, and the private sector in Silicon Valley.<sup>20</sup> Mayfair received an NII planning grant in October 1996 and began implementing its strategic plan a year later.

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<sup>16</sup> Neighborhood Renewal: Our Story, Progress Report, Neighborhood Improvement Initiative, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, August 2000.

<sup>17</sup> Neighborhood Renewal: Our Story, Progress Report, Neighborhood Improvement Initiative, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, August 2000.

<sup>18</sup> Teamworks, 7<sup>th</sup> Street/McClymonds Corridor Neighborhood Improvement Initiative, Final Report: Year One Implementation for the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, December 2000.

<sup>19</sup> A Bridge to the Future: 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Cross-Site Retreat of the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation's Neighborhood Improvement Initiative, November 17-18, 2000.

<sup>20</sup> Neighborhood Renewal: Our Story, Progress Report, Neighborhood Improvement Initiative, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, August 2000.

The one-square-mile Mayfair neighborhood has approximately 6,500 predominantly Latino residents in 1,600 households. About a quarter of the residents live under the poverty level. Two-thirds of the houses in Mayfair, technically part of Silicon Valley, need rehabilitation. Three-fourths of the residents are Latino, about 12.5 percent are Asians/Pacific Islanders, about 5 percent are African Americans and 1 percent are American Indians and others.

The Community Foundation Silicon Valley was selected to be the managing partner for the Mayfair Neighborhood Improvement Initiative. The Mexican American Community Services Agency was selected to be the lead agency for the Initiative, a role it played until the collaborative decided to create a nonprofit organization of its own to manage the Initiative. Other principal partners in the Mayfair Initiative are neighborhood residents, the City of San Jose, Santa Clara County, the San Jose Redevelopment Agency, Alum Rock School District, and various community-based organizations.<sup>21</sup>

The Mayfair Collaborative initially included eighteen residents and fifteen staff from local public agencies and nonprofit organizations. They spent eight months creating a community plan, aided by more than 200 other residents and representatives of various parts of the community.<sup>22</sup>

The Mayfair neighborhood strategic plan included seventy-six projects related to seven facets of life the residents want to change. Projects address primary health care services, home-based child care, literacy programs in elementary schools, scholarships for college, community gardens, streetlights, housing rehabilitation, arts education, juvenile restitution, and economic development. The planners estimated the Initiative would cost \$14.4 million in the first three years. The Hewlett Foundation had pledged \$2.25 million for that period.<sup>23</sup> In the first year of implementation, the Mayfair Neighborhood Improvement Initiative initiated thirty of the seventy-six projects, leveraging \$2.9 million from public and private sources.

Today a fully staffed nonprofit organization with a fifteen-member board and nine staff, the Mayfair Improvement Initiative, Inc., oversees fifty community development projects from a 3.4-acre community garden to a Housing Assistance Center.<sup>24</sup> The Initiative's budget has grown to almost \$4 million per year. There are signs of change in the community. Homes are being painted. Parents have five new day care homes from which to choose. Also, the City of San Jose has adopted many aspects of the Mayfair model into its own neighborhood revitalization strategy.

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<sup>21</sup> Neighborhood Improvement Initiative Sponsored by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, 1999.

<sup>22</sup> Neighborhood Renewal: Our Story, Progress Report, Neighborhood Improvement Initiative, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, August 2000.

<sup>23</sup> Neighborhood Renewal: Our Story, Progress Report, Neighborhood Improvement Initiative, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, August 2000.

<sup>24</sup> A Bridge to the Future: 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Cross-Site Retreat of the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation's Neighborhood Improvement Initiative, November 17-18, 2000.

## INTERVIEWEES

Alvertha Penny, Hewlett Foundation

Renu Karir, Hewlett Foundation

Connie Walker, Walker & Associates, Consultant to the Hewlett Foundation for the  
Neighborhood Improvement Initiative

### East Palo Alto-Stanford University

Stewart Hyland, Chairman of the governing board, One East Palo Alto NII

Todd Stowell, Executive Director, One East Palo Alto

Mario Paz, Project Manager for One East Palo Alto NII, Peninsula Community Foundation

Omowale Satterwhite, Community Development Institute

Nadinne Cruz, Director, Haas Center for Public Service

Carilee Pang, Project Coordinator, Haas Center for Public Service,

Barbara Mouton, Advisory Board, One East Palo Alto

Refugio Huizar, Resident

Charisse Domingo, graduate of Stanford University

Luis Ricardo Fraga, Associate Professor and Director of Undergraduate Studies,  
Department of Political Science, Stanford University

Fay McNair, Committee Member and Delegate Agency for Receipt of Funds For Economic  
Development, One East Palo Alto

### West Oakland-Berkeley

Allen Edson, Executive Director, 7th Street/McClymonds Corridor Initiative

Rhonnell Sotello, Coordinator for the 7th Street/McClymonds Corridor Initiative, San  
Francisco Foundation

Moira Kenney, Project Manager and Deputy Director, Institute of Urban and Regional  
Development, UC Berkeley

Heather Hood, Community Resource Planner, Institute of Urban and Regional  
Development, UC Berkeley

Robert Ogilvie, Professor, Department of City and Regional Planning, UC Berkeley

Jane Rongerude, Graduate Student, UC Berkeley

Mary Lake, Resident and Chair of the Community Development Work Group, 7th  
Street/McClymonds Corridor Initiative

Margaret Gordon, Resident, Research Coordinating Committee

Jabari Herbert, Director, Alliance for West Oakland Development, Grantee of the 7th  
Street/McClymonds Corridor Initiative

Monsa Nitoto, Board Member, 7th Street/McClymonds Corridor Initiative

### Mayfair

Cindy Ho, Mayfair Project Co-Manager, Community Foundation Silicon Valley

Adriana Garza, Executive Director, Mayfair Improvement Initiative, Inc.

Jaime Alvarado, Program Director, Mayfair Improvement Initiative, Inc.